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SUBJECT: KOSOVO RECOGNITION: HOLDING BANGLADESH'S FEET TO  
THE FIRE

REF: DHAKA 831 NOTAL

Summary

1. (SBU) Post continues to press the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) to recognize Kosovo's independence. Despite repeated private and public pressure, however, the GOB continues to defer its decision, likely for fear of alienating Russia. We recommend that this issue feature prominently in the Bangladesh Foreign Minister's upcoming visit to Washington and that we urge U.S. partner capitals to weigh in with the GOB.

Kosovo Not Forgotten

2. (SBU) The Ambassador took advantage of an August 20 call on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni (reftel) to reiterate U.S. urging that the GOB recognize Kosovo's independence. Moni deflected the Ambassador's request for an explanation of the GOB's dithering, saying only that she would work with her colleagues in the GOB to "try to come to a decision."

U.S. Kosovo Support Known

3. (U) Speaking to the media following his meeting with Moni, the Ambassador emphasized the arguments in favor of recognizing Kosovo. His statement on Kosovo garnered widespread coverage in media reports of his meeting with Moni. In the past, such statements have generated subsequent editorials urging the GOB to recognize Kosovo.

Foreign Secretary Speaks Out Against Recognition

4. (U) On August 22, in his first press conference since taking office, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes said "at this moment, we don't feel the need to recognize Kosovo," in response to a question from a reporter. Although Quayes went on to say that the GOB was deliberately not making a decision regarding Kosovo to avoid alienating either the U.S. or Russia, local media reported his comments as a rebuke to the Ambassador's arguments in favor of recognition.

GOB Undecided on Kosovo?

5. (SBU) In the wake of the extensive coverage given to Quayes' remarks, Polcouns contacted an adviser to the Prime

Minister, who indicated that Quayes' comments should not be taken as a GOB decision against recognizing Kosovo and that the GOB continued to weigh the decision.

Comment: GOB Trying to Duck the Decision

16. (SBU) Some observers have explained Quayes' reluctance to recognize Kosovo "at this moment" as indicative of the Foreign Secretary's affinity for Moscow, his most recent overseas posting. Quayes' subsequent statement, however--that the GOB is trying to avoid angering either the U.S. or Russia (and thereby scotch potential energy cooperation with Moscow) on Kosovo--is likely more accurate. We will continue to make the case that Bangladesh should recognize Kosovo's independence and little to lose from doing so. We recommend that Kosovo recognition feature prominently in the Foreign Minister's mid-September visit to Washington. The U.S. should also encourage our allies and partners to weigh in with the GOB on Kosovo recognition.

MORIARTY